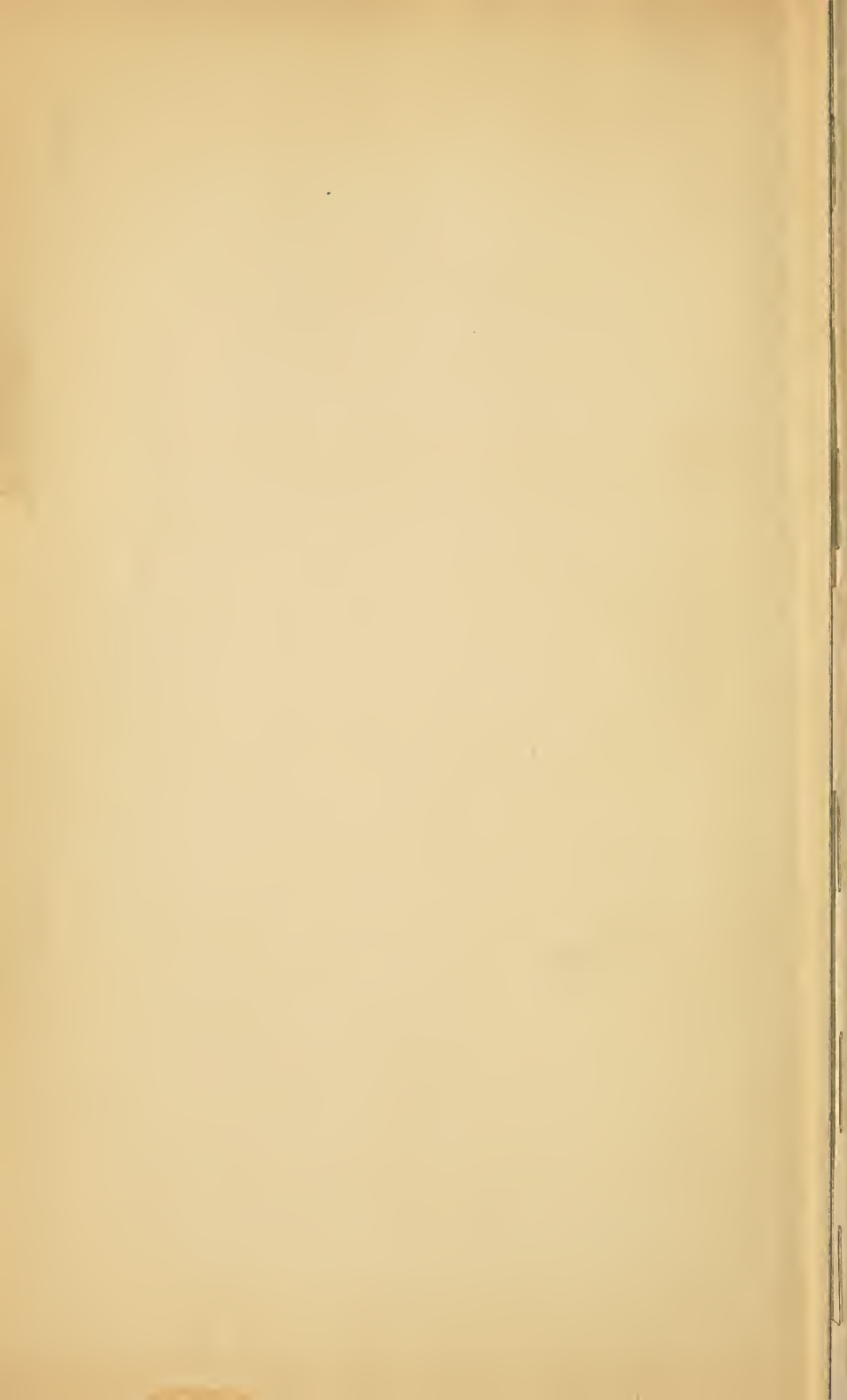


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CROMWELL AND HIS TIMES.

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LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN UNION ACADEMY OF LITERA-  
TURE, ART AND SCIENCE,

AT

WASHINGTON CITY,

ON

MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 28, 1870,

BY

HON. P. VAN TRUMP,

AND ORDERED TO BE PRINTED BY A VOTE OF THE ACADEMY.

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WASHINGTON, D. C. :  
PRINTED BY JUDD & DETWEILER.  
1871.

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WASHINGTON

## CROMWELL AND HIS TIMES.

I have selected as the theme of the lecture this evening, one of the most important epochs in the annals of English history, and one of the most extraordinary men of his age, to wit: the GREAT CIVIL WAR in England, and the hero of its achievements, as well as the arbiter of its results, OLIVER CROMWELL. There is something solemn, and at the same time instructive, or ought to be, in the contemplation of these great periods in the history of the civil life of the human race, in its lowest as well as in its highest types of organization, when, in the providence of God, kings are dethroned, governments are broken up, old dynasties are swept away, and new ones inaugurated, through the fierce passions of the People, whether aroused by the deep sense of *political* wrongs, or they are hurled against each other by the phrenzy of *religious* antagonism. These great historic periods stand like beacons along the coast of Time, shedding their clear and warning light upon the great highway of nations, exposing the rocks and shoals on which have split many a goodly bark, freighted with the highest hopes and the dearest rights of millions of human beings. The English Revolution of 1640, was intensified by a combination of both the religious and the political elements. In this characteristic, it stands in a line of partial coincidence with its greater and more horrid successor, the French Revolution. But the similitude terminates with the advent of the two great struggles. Though similar in the causes which produced them, how widely different in their results, and in the motives and feelings of the great intellects which controlled, or were controlled by them! How radically different, too, were the two great master-spirits who finally brought them to a close, by the irresistible power of their own self-will, in the objects which they had in view, and in the genius, as well as in the moral tone of their individuality, CROMWELL and NAPOLEON! The French Revolution, in the philosophy of its devolution, was unlike any other civil commotion, which preceded it, in the history of the world. It was, in some things, the most hopeful and promising in its commencement; the most horrid and bloody in its progress; and the most unmixed and contemptibly despotic in its conclusion. Indeed, for the unmitigated furor of its prosecution, and the naked and aimless terror of its details, it was one of the most extraordinary struggles of any recorded in the annals of mankind. The differences in some

of the leading causes which produced, and the motives which guided the English Civil War and the French Revolution, are not more striking in their nature than were the means resorted to in pushing them forward to their ultimate objects. In both these great volcanses of human passion, Religion was a prominent if not controlling element of discord. In the case of the English people, one of the leading impulses of the rebellion was a most bitter and sectarian crusade against the National Church, as an intolerable oligarchy, sustained by the power of the State, but with a clear and avowed programme for the establishment of a purer religion, and a more just form of ecclesiastical polity, as they understood it. With France and the French people, it was a determined and inexorable war against *all* religions, whether legitimated by State policy, or sanctified by private observance. With them, the only Supreme Power acknowledged was Death; the only Future recognized was Annihilation; the only Deity worshipped was a wild, anarchic, but, strange to say, fraternizing Spirit of Liberty. In England, a religious accountability was hopefully acknowledged by all ranks and all sections, although its technical forms and minor canons furnished grounds for the most intense and bigoted disputation. In France, on the contrary, the whole system was sapped to its foundations; the religious faith of the nation was subverted by the fierce infidelity of her men of genius, her statesmen, and her philosophers. In England, however embittered was the contest as to the *mode* of worship, they all united in one common and cherished faith as to the divine *object* of their adoration; and although distracted and torn asunder by contending factions, the public mind was attracted to one common centre, in the atoning merits of the Divine Founder of Christianity; while in France, the whole plan of salvation was repudiated, and, in its stead, a tinselled Goddess of Liberty was impiously set up as a fit homage for the People, inaugurated by the baneful genius of Rosseau, of Voltaire, of Raynel, and of Mirabeau, the high-priests of this new and impious philosophy! Subject to the modification of time, of race, and of civilization, these are of some of the direful consequences, written by the unchangeable hand of God, in characters of retributive fire, upon the front of civil war!

Before we enter upon the immediate consideration of the English Revolution,—its indefinite commencement,—its slow but steady progress,—and its decisive but most unexpected termination,—as well as the necessary study of the characters and actions of the great men who moulded its destinies, or were submerged by its flood-tide of commotion,—it will be proper, and perhaps instructive, to take a brief but rapid survey of the English Government, and the temper of the English People, for a reign or two prior to its advent.

James VI of Scotland, but the first of the Stuart line who reigned

over the English people, ascended the throne of the British Empire at a time when the public mind was largely occupied and excited upon two questions essential to human happiness, Religion, and its correlative aspiration, Individual Liberty and Constitutional Government. Notwithstanding the absolute and arbitrary power exercised by the Tudor dynasty; indeed, as the inevitable consequence of the tyranny of that proud and haughty race of princes, an undertoned but growing and determined spirit of liberty had manifested itself, not only in the commercial and middle ranks of the people, but also, to their honor be it said, in a large portion of the nobility of England. Prior to that period, the two great subdivisions of the English people, were the nobility and the yeomanry. That powerful class, the middle rank of society, which has since become the chief glory of England, was then beginning to make itself felt in all the departments of Government. It was the natural offspring of trade and commerce, invigorated by the impulse of adventure in the discovery of the continent of America. It arose out of the views of the feudal system which it had rested like a nightmare upon the nations of Europe. The power of the castle and the donjon-keep went down before the new and greater power of the counting-house and the work-shop. Trade, commerce, enfranchised labor, were the genii who silently but steadily worked out this wonderful revolution in the social and political condition of man. In conjunction with that great political reformer of the world, the printing-press, this divine genesis of new rights, of new duties, and new relations, imparted also a new life, breathed a higher energy, and infused a quickened intelligence, into all the ramifications of the social and political fabric, slowly but surely preparing the public mind, not only for the full appreciation, but the noble assertion of those great civil rights which had been withheld by the strong arm of arbitrary power. The gradual introduction of this new and powerful element, seemed to have been overlooked, or at least disregarded, by the reigning princes and their purblind ministers, until they were fully notified of its existence by the force and vigor of its assaults upon the prerogatives of the crown. Then came the shock of those two great political forces, Prerogative on the one side and Privilege on the other. Some of the laws passed by Elizabeth and James fully developed not only the fact, but the spirit of this rapidly growing class. The tyrannic statutes against the Non-Conformists, whether Protestant or Catholic, were well calculated to arouse an indignant spirit in a people not wholly destitute of all sense of natural right and political justice. Those against the Catholics were especially severe and unjust. Upon being convicted, in a court of law, of the sin of not attending the established church, or of professing the Catholic religion, they were disfranchised from holding any office of trust or emolument; they were not allowed to keep arms in their houses;

they were not permitted to come within ten miles of the city of London on pain of being fined and imprisoned; they could bring no action at law or suit in equity; they were not permitted to travel above five miles from their homes, unless under the authority of a license; and no marriage, or burial, or baptism, were allowed, otherwise than by the regularly ordained ministers of the Church of England.\*

The laws against dissenting Protestants, were scarcely less rigorous. In this state of things, the Scottish Solomon, as he has been derisively termed, ascended the English throne. He derived his title from being the grandson of Margaret Tudor, eldest daughter of Henry VII, he who overcame Richard III on the fatal field of Bosworth, immortalized more by the genius of Shakspeare than the death of the tyrant. It is somewhat singular, that James, the son of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, should have been, in his public acts at least, one of the strongest anti-catholic princes who ever wielded the English sceptre; but the private teachings of his celebrated tutor, and no less celebrated assailant of his mother's memory, George Buchanan, seem to have moulded his religious character, in despite of that mother's creed, or the remembrance of her wrongs at the hands of Elizabeth. These circumstances induced the English people to look for a peaceful and happy reign. These fond expectations, however, were speedily blasted; and the history of this monarch's reign consists of little else, as associated with himself, than exhibitions of pedantic disputation on theology and witch-craft, and fierce and unyielding contests between the crown and the parliament, by king-craft on the one side, and popular privileges on the other. A minute and detailed account of these controversies, would be out of place on the present occasion; but it is of some importance to know the origin of these struggles between the crown and the parliament, as they were the primary cause of the succeeding events, occurring in the reign of his son, Charles I, which form so conspicuous a figure in the history of Great Britain, and which found their ultimate and perfect fruition in the triumphant establishment of free religion and free government on the American continent. It is to those great contests, in the parliament and upon the plains of England, that *we* owe the high boon of liberty which we are now entitled to enjoy under written constitutions; and which we seem to appreciate so little, or so lightly, that we were willing, on both sides, to hazard its very existence, not in a struggle for its establishment, for it was already established by the clearest written guaranties ever drawn by the hand of man, but, as against all the admonitions of history, to stake it upon mere questions of policy and administration. In the barbarous ages

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\*Hume.



which preceded the 17th century, the human mind, enervated by superstition and obscured by ignorance, and in that transition state passing from the feudal to the modern system of politics, seemed to have given up all pretensions to liberty, either civil or religious. Unlimited and uncontrolled despotism prevailed everywhere in Europe; and although England suffered less in this respect than almost any other nation, the many examples of arbitrary power exerted by her sovereigns, from Richard III to Edward VI, show that the English were very far from being a free people. The only business of their parliaments, during that time, seemed to be to vote subsidies upon the people, the manner and extent of which were wholly dictated by the crown. An incontrovertible proof of how little restraint the people could then impose upon the authority of the sovereign, is the fact that the proceedings of parliament were accounted of so little consequence, even by the members of the body itself, that there were no authorized records kept of them. In the regular edition of the "Parliamentary Proceedings," published in 1767, in twenty-two volumes, two small octavo volumes comprise the whole transactions of the English parliament, from the earliest period up to the accession of Elizabeth; and these, as the editors say in their preface, are mostly taken from the private papers of individual members deposited in the British Museum. The proceedings of parliament being thus held by the nation of so little consequence, it is not to be wondered at that the sessions were irregular and widely separated, or that little interest was felt, and less attention paid, to the choice or continuance of its members. In the reign of Elizabeth and her predecessors, the sessions of parliament did not occupy more than one-twelfth part of the whole time. In the time of Charles I, and up to the time of the Protectorate, the disparity was still greater, not *then* from the indifference of the people, but from the strong disinclination of the King either to rule or be ruled by parliament. Did the limits of this lecture permit, it would be an interesting examination to consider the various questions of prerogative and privilege which arose between James and his parliament, for the reason that we of the 19th century are indebted for many of the high privileges which we now enjoy to the heroic struggles of the great men of that age, who boldly demanded and extorted the rights of the people from the iron-grasp of tyranny. As a parallel to these political contests between the crown and parliament, and as a joint cause of the fearful war which convulsed the whole empire in the succeeding reign, and which finally overthrew the monarchy of a thousand years, a brief survey of the religious question is necessary to a full understanding of the mighty issues involved in the Great English Civil War. At the time of the accession of James, there were four great religious parties in England: the Established Episcopacy, the Presbyterians,

the Catholics, and the Puritans. When these several parties first crystalized into separate forms of organization, there was very little difference between the presbyterian and the puritan faith. Indeed, at that time, puritanism was understood to be nothing more than *political* presbyterianism. It was only after the dissolution of the monarchy that they became distinct parties, at which time they were driven asunder by an incurable hatred of each other, and the strongest antagonism of political objects. I have already alluded to the special and very severe public enactments against the Catholics. The two other religious subdivisions of the people, the presbyterians and the puritans, were included and disabled, in a more general form, by the statutes against Non-Conformists; statutes which might imprison the bodies, but could not fetter or bend the mighty genius of such immortal men as Bunyan, and Baxter, and Milton, and De Foe! The tinker's hammer was silenced in the streets and lanes of Bedfordshire, but the tinker's genius sent forth from the prison-walls of Bedford jail the immortal but sectarian "Pilgrim's Progress," to live forever in the religious hearts of the common people as the unsurpassed allegorical battle-field of the christian soldier! The humble hrazier's shop in an obscure street of London was shut up by the minions of power, and its proud and gifted owner imprisoned within the mouldy walls of Newgate; but from its gloomy portals there issued the fascinating pages of "Robinson Crusoe," to lead captive the mind of *Young* England, and from whence also proceeded those trenchant and powerful political tracts which stirred up the slumbering heart of the *Old* England of that day to its profoundest depths, and shook the throne upon its unsteady foundations! It is difficult, if not impossible, in this our day of written constitutions, if not more enlightened public liberty, to appreciate or comprehend the enormous oppression and tyranny of this vile system of legislation. These public commotions do not so much *change* as they *develop* human nature. They only lift the mask which an unevangelized civilization hangs upon the natural features of man. Once remove from the passions of men the *restraint* of law, and all fear of the consequences of the *infraction* of law, and man becomes the enemy of man, more cruel and implacable than the wild beasts of the forest:

"Amid the woods the tiger knows his kind;  
The panther preys not on the panther brood;  
Man only is the common foe of man."

In that wild whirlpool of unbridled passion, any man, who was not, by his cowardice, driven to be a hypocrite, was constantly at the mercy of the lowest and most abandoned of mankind, the common informer. Legislative *premiums* were thus held up, as the most powerful temptation for the commission of acts of depravity, at the very thought of which human nature recoils with horror,

They were eminently calculated to loosen the bands which held society together; to dissolve all civil, moral, and religious obligation; to poison the sources of domestic happiness; and to annihilate every principle of honor. Apart from the Catholic population, who had no affinity, whether of feeling or doctrine, with any of the religious parties, the great body of English Non-Conformists were presbyterian and puritan, prior to the accession of Charles I. These were still further subdivided, during the Civil War, into Independents, Anabaptists, Arminians, and Fifth-Monarchy men. The Puritan Party, whether considered as a political or religious sect, exerted such an important influence on the civil war in England, as well as impressed itself so vividly and indelibly upon some of the local populations and social institutions of our own country, that they are worthy of some special notice. They are the prototypes, whether in politics or religion, of that modern class of men, and women, too, in the sudden discovery of a new system of woman's rights, who assume to be governed by a higher and more spiritual standard of duty, whether public or private, social or political, than is furnished by the laws or public opinion, and wholly independent and defiant of both. They were a set of stern, saturnine, deeply-earnest men, who claimed to have found a new mission for man upon earth; and who were ready to sustain it by the sharp argument of the sword—to

“—Prove their doctrine orthodox,  
By apostolic blows and knocks;”

And discarding all mere human constitutions and compacts, by setting up in their stead a wild, fanatical, and irresponsible forum of private conscience, as the sole *arbiter* of things temporal or eternal. With them, all laws and constitutional guarantees, even the sacred truth of revelation itself, were made subservient to their own human interpretation of the Divine Government. In setting up the Bible, in political affairs, as a substitute for constitutions and laws, and as the only rule of action for the government of man in his civil relations, the pedestal which they reared, and upon which they placed it, was their own narrow and sectarian construction of its precepts, which they mistook, or were likely to do, for the infallible law of Deity. They professed to follow, as they understood it, the *pure* Word of God, in opposition to all traditions, to all mere human ordinances, and to all other authorities coming in conflict with their interpretations of the scriptures; and they maintained, with a fierceness and energy “which touched the highest scale of fanaticism,” that every man has a natural right to judge and act for himself, without being rightfully subject to the laws of the civil magistrate, or the decrees of councils, churches or synods.\* In this sense, they

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\*Macaulay.

were both the religious and the political jacobins of the 17th century. I know it is the fashion, in this country, growing out of a kind of idolatrous veneration of our "Pilgrim Fathers," to speak of the Puritans in terms of unqualified eulogy. You might as well expect to hear George Washington or Benjamin Franklin condemned in a patriotic Fourth-of-July oration, as to hear the Puritans, or their doctrines, either religious or political, criticised by a public speaker or public writer of the present day. There must be no interference with *our* national Hero-Worship; the American mind must have its idols. In its morbid tendency to rear its partizan altars whereon to place its votive offerings to some deified idea or glorified person, it is not surprising that they should occasionally break the second commandment of the Decalogue, either in the way of doctrinal error or personal imbecility. As the result of this peculiar trait in our national character, the Puritans have long since received their Apotheosis in the Pantheon of popular prejudice; and it would be vain, if not sacrilegious, to expose their errors or condemn their actions. It is undoubtedly true, however, that, in England, even their most extravagant doctrines were instrumental in the accomplishment of a great public good;—and that it is equally true, the zeal and firmness with which they resisted usurped authority, in an age and under circumstances when firmness for the right was something more than a common virtue, tended largely to the adoption and perfection of a system of constitutional law, which established the public liberty, and ensured the common rights of the people, no candid or philosophic thinker will have the hardihood to deny. All these grand results, however, growing out of this great struggle between the crown and the people, owed their consummation to the peculiar conjuncture of the times, to the important and inevitable *ends* sought to be attained, rather than to the fortuitous moral *means* adopted for their accomplishment. The time had come, out of the long dim ages of despotism, when the noblest political victory, achieved by the common and united efforts of the English people, was won for the benefit of mankind for all time to come, unless we, their descendants and the recipients of this great heritage, shall prove recreant to the high and responsible duty devolved upon us of transmitting it unimpaired to our posterity. It was the spirit of liberty, awakened in *all* the people, without reference to sect or class, which shattered the power of prerogative in its strongholds, and made the crown amenable, as well as conformable, to public opinion. The puritans united in this great battle;—they were but a *portion* of the common army which achieved the victory;—and they have no more right to appropriate to themselves all the glory, either upon their religious tenets or their political opinions, than had the infantry under Manchester, in the bloody fight of Marston Moor, to claim the exclusive renown of that well-fought field, because they fought

with different weapons from Cromwell's invincible brigade of horse

The Puritans owed their origin to the arbitrary reign of Elizabeth. Like all persecutions, her oppressive measures only seemed to increase their numbers. Notwithstanding the decided tone of Elizabeth, two of her most powerful ministers, Burleigh and Walsingham, secretly favored this new and rising class of politico-religionists. Their stern and gloomy tempers naturally sympathized with the kindred spirit of the ostracized sectaries. Upon the death of the Queen and the accession of James, the Puritan party looked hopefully for a change of measures in the policy of the crown. But in this they were doomed to disappointment. The lofty spirit of independence assumed by the Puritans, in the matters of both Church and State, could find no sympathetic response in the ultra notions of James, in relation to the regal prerogatives. The celebrated conference of Bishops at Hampton Court separated the king and the Puritans forever. From that time the war of opinion, as a prelude to the war of force, began, and the dogmatic pedantry of James on the one side, and the unbending determination to maintain their rights on the other, was exhibited in a series of oppressions and counter resistance, which lasted until the close of the reign. In the year 1615, the persecution of a single unknown and humble individual, instigated and managed by James himself, set all England aglow with indignation at so gross an infraction of the law, and did more to build up and vitalize the political power of the Puritans, than all the disabling acts of Elizabeth. An aged and exemplary gentleman, by the name of Edmund Peachum, a non-conforming minister of the Puritan faith, living in one of the remote counties of England, was arrested upon a charge of treason for writing a seditious sermon, which had been found by some government spy in his private study. The sermon had never been preached; and the old man, upon being inhumanly put to the torture, declared it was never intended to be delivered or published. The case is reported in the second volume of the English State Trials, and exhibits one of the most extraordinary instances of the tyrannical and unconstitutional interference of the king, the crown lawyers, and the judges, in the whole range of judicial history. It is one of the most painful and degrading reflections, that such great lights in philosophy and law, as Lord Bacon and Lord Coke, should be found mean and dastardly enough to lend their great names and ability to the low-minded and malicious design of James to get from the judges, of the grandest judicial tribunal then in Christendom, an extra-judicial and private opinion of this man's guilt upon the law of constructive treason; so true it is, that those who trample on the helpless are always the first to cringe to the powerful. This simple instance in the life of Bacon, of a total negation of his

manhood, would justify and give point to the withering sarcasm of Pope, when he characterizes him as the

“Greatest, wisest, *meanest* of mankind!”

It is no palliation, but rather an aggravation, of Coke's gross and scandalous misconduct on that occasion, that he at first boldly stood out against the monstrous illegality of James' proceedings, and asserted that “they were not according to the customs of the realm.” His deep-seated jealousy of his illustrious rival for court favor, overcame his principles as a lawyer and his high and solemn duty as Chief Justice of the kingdom;—and not all his great and noble struggles on the side of public liberty in the House of Commons, after Bacon had supplanted him in the favor of James, could atone for “the deep damnation” of his judicial perjury, in the case of the humble puritan preacher. As for Bacon, a man of the most magnificent intellect of that or any other age, heaven's avenging justice hurled him from his high estate, and sunk him to the lowest depths of human degradation. In less than six years after the trial of Peachum, he was impeached in the House of Lords, found guilty of accepting bribes as Lord Chancellor, and was sentenced to pay a fine of £40,000, and to be imprisoned in the Tower during the pleasure of the king. This instance, in Peachum's case, of the application of the torture, and the vile, unconstitutional, but successful attempt in procuring the private opinion and pledges of the judges, in a capital case, which those judges themselves were afterwards to try, set the minds of the English people on fire; procured an order from the Queen, the unfortunate Anne of Denmark, positively prohibiting for the future the use of the rack; and finally gave a new impulse and power to that down-trodden portion of the people, who, in the next reign, ruled the nation through the parliament, and brought the devoted head of James' son to the block.

Thus, it will be seen, that upon these three great questions of Pre-rogative, Religion, and Popular Privilege, the seeds of revolution which overthrew the English monarchy, and established a new form of government in its stead, were sown long anterior to the ripening harvest. It was the spirit of freedom breathing over the stagnant waters of despotism; it was the impulse of a regenerative political philosophy, energizing the best minds and the profoundest thinkers of the age; and though the contest was long doubtful, the heroic spirits who thus grappled with despots, looked hopefully into the future for victory. The attempts that were begun, and resolutely continued, by the House of Commons, to withstand the sordid despotism of the first British monarch of the Stuart line, first prepared the popular mind to appreciate, as well the intolerable incubus of royal tyranny, as the glorious principles of a well-regulated

system of constitutional liberty. Since the enforced signature of John to Magna Charta by the fierce Barons at Runnymede, no contest between the people and the crown had taken place, in which the public liberty was so deeply interested. Had the bold and unyielding spirits who first raised their patriotic voices against the illegal exactions of James, allowed themselves to be intimidated by the frowns of royalty and the terrors of the dark dungeons of the Tower, England would now be destitute of those great constitutional barriers which, while they protect the legitimate powers of the throne, equally secure the just rights and liberties of the people.

In the midst of this feverish excitement of the popular mind, and at a time when the English nation was looking with the highest hopes to the Parliament as the theatre upon which was to be worked out the great problem of civil and religious liberty in their favor, Charles I ascended the imperial throne of his ancestors. No prince who ever wielded a kingly sceptre, had so rare an opportunity presented him of reconciling the political dissensions, which existed among his people; though it is doubtful whether any effort of the crown, or of the established church, could have compromised or adjusted the religious feuds which existed, even among the non-conformists themselves, upon questions of abstract faith and doctrine. That Charles, in the end, unwisely overlooked the temper of his people, or recklessly disregarded the consequences of a disagreement with them, upon questions of administrative power against popular privilege, is clearly manifest in the history of his first parliament. The first parliament met in June, 1625, and large and liberal supplies of money were voted by the House of Commons to the king's revenue. The second parliament met in 1626. The Commons were still disposed to be liberal in the supply of money to their sovereign; but among its members were such men as Hampden, and Pym, and Selden, and Sir John Elliott, whose names are as immortal as history itself, and who took the determined position that no more money should be voted, unless upon the express condition that the King should enter into the most solemn guaranties against all future encroachments of the crown upon the rightful powers of the People, through their representatives in Parliament. His third parliament was convened in 1628, of which the man who afterwards became the arbiter of the fate of Charles and of the monarchy, OLIVER CROMWELL, was a member. In this parliament, during its first session, five subsidies were granted to the royal exchequer, amounting to more than a million of pounds sterling, or \$5,000,000 of our money. These were large and liberal supplies for that period in the history of the English government and of the monetary condition of the world. The representatives of the people thus responded to the wishes of the crown, in a spirit of manly gratitude to the king for his consent to the great Petition of Right,

which was looked upon as the second great charter of English liberty, carried through by the firmness of Hampden and his patriotic copeers. Charles, in giving his constitutional assent to this celebrated narrative of popular grievances, pledged his kingly word to raise no more taxes without the consent of parliament; to abolish the system of forced loans; to imprison no man except by legal process; to billet no more soldiers in the domicile of the citizen; and to leave the jurisdiction of offences to the common law tribunals of the country. Happy would it have been for the throne, and for the peace and happiness of the people, had Charles been an honest man and observed in good faith these solemn undertakings. This period in the history of these great struggles is too broad; the instances of bad faith on the one side, and of stern and unyielding pertinacity on the other, are too numerous, to be noted within the narrow limits of a single lecture. I will, therefore, with your permission, pass over the long interval of eleven years, from 1629 to 1640, a period filled with the treachery and double-dealing of the king, in which he governed without parliaments, and violated every pledge he had so solemnly given, up to the time when the celebrated Long Parliament commenced its session. Lord Macauley, with that richness of rhetorical antithesis for which he was so remarkable, thus speaks of this parliament:—

“On the 3d of November, 1640,—a day to be long remembered,—met the great Parliament, destined to every extreme of fortune,—to empire and to servitude, to glory and to contempt; at one time the sovereign of its sovereign, at another time the servant of its servants, and the tool of its tools. From the first day of its meeting the attendance was great, and the aspect of its members was that of men not disposed to do the work negligently. The dissolution of the late parliament had convinced most of them that half-way measures would no longer suffice.”

In the long interval between the two parliaments, Charles had broken his royal pledge, under the pernicious counsels of the Earl of Strafford. He became lost to all sense and remembrance of his solemnly plighted faith, under the influence of that eminent but dangerous minister. Among the many arbitrary and unconstitutional schemes devised by this ingenious and unscrupulous statesman, to raise revenue without the aid and sanction of the money power of the House of Commons, was the celebrated Writ of Ship Money. This mode of filling the coffers of the national exchequer, was in direct and palpable violation of the compact between the king and parliament in the Petition of Right. Not even the friends and pensioned eulogists of Charles have ever claimed it to be otherwise. Strafford, like all renegades, was not disposed to be guided by moderation in his measures of administration. He ordered writs, levying this tribute, to be sent into all the counties of England. JOHN HAMP-



DEN, then a quiet and almost unknown but well-educated country gentleman of Buckinghamshire, in behalf of the people of England rather than for himself, resolved at all hazards to test the legality of these high-handed proceedings. The moment he assumed this lofty and defiant position, he stood transfigured as the Genius of English Liberty. The question of taxation, at that time, had entered largely into the theory of constitutional government; and in some of the prior civil commotions of England, it formed, either in the shape of direct taxation or in the grant of monopolies, one of the chief grounds of contention. Unlike the great popular struggles of the ancient commonwealths of Greece and Rome, where the contests were mainly centered either in the choice of rulers or the supremacy of caste, the English people, from the earliest historic periods, had struggled with the great revenue powers of the crown, until at last they triumphantly established this great attribute of sovereignty in the legislative department of the government, not as a prescribed, but as a self-imposed social and political obligation. It was a violation of this great principle of political power, in the reign of George III, which spoke American liberty into existence; and like its sister-spirit in England, it is to be regulated, maintained, and perpetuated here, only by a kindred heroism to that which animated Hampden in his noble resistance to illegal and unconstitutional exaction in the usurped powers of the crown. His cousin, afterwards the celebrated Oliver St. John, and a distant kinsman of the more celebrated Henry St. John Lord Bolingbroke, was then a briefless barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and was not unwilling to try his forensic strength with so formidable an adversary upon so great a question. The eyes of all England were turned towards Westminster Hall. Every free-born Englishman felt that his own liberty and property were involved in the issue. The case came on to be heard in 1636, in the Court of Exchequer, before all the Judges of England, and is to be found reported in full in the 3d vol. of the State Trials. It occupied twelve days in the argument of the legal questions involved in the writ, and was decided by eight of the judges against four, in favor of the power of the crown. It is a remarkable fact that Charles, following in the footsteps of his father in Peachum's case, in a letter to the judges over his own signature, required of them an extra-judicial opinion, in advance of the argument of the cause, and that the judges were cowardly and servile enough to send back to him such an opinion as would be satisfactory to the royal demands. This decision was the great fact occurring in the long interval between the two parliaments, which brought to the Long Parliament that inflexible spirit of opposition to the royal prerogative, and that unconquerable devotion to the rights and privileges of the people, as represented in the legislative branch of the government, which finally set up the arbitrament of the sword, and plunged the nation into a

bloody and protracted war. My limits, greatly as I have pressed them, will not permit me taking more than a rapid view of a few important events prior to the open appeal to arms: These are the impeachment and execution of Strafford,—the Grand Remonstrance,—and the attempted arrest, by the king in person, of the Five Members of the House of Commons. The trial and execution of the unfortunate prime minister of Charles I, has perhaps elicited more sympathy and commiseration for the victim, than any other case of capital punishment, for a political offense, that occurred in the 17th century. The lofty disdain and bold bearing of the man,—the consummate ability with which he defended himself, and his administration of affairs, at his trial in the House of Peers,—the cowardly abandonment of him by Charles, in whose ignoble service he had risked his life and his fortune, and who had most solemnly promised him that not a hair of his head should be touched,—and the touching, beautiful, and eloquent appeal to his judges, which, even to this day, is often published as one of the finest specimens of pathetic elocution in the language;—all conspire to make the trial of the Earl of Strafford one of the most interesting and memorable cases in the annals of politico-criminal jurisprudence. And yet stern and even-handed justice, and a mindful regard for public security and public liberty, compel the mind to an unwilling acquiescence in his fate. His proud and defiant spirit, and his overweening confidence in his great abilities, in milder times and under a better regulated or better administered government, might have sustained him, without danger to himself, or prejudice to his sovereign;—but when mutual forbearance was necessary between king and people, when party animosities were to be reconciled and personal feelings modified and subdued, and the whole scheme of complex and antagonistic administration required an affability of manners, if not a pliancy of temper, to meet the trying emergencies of the times, it is certain that Strafford was the last man in England to be entrusted with the responsibility of public affairs, or to hold in his grasp the great and dangerous powers of the crown. I do not propose entering into the examination of the question whether the execution of Strafford was legal and regular, because done by an *ex post facto* law,—that was a question which for a long time divided the legal profession in England. I have noticed it only to show the great power which the parliament had obtained over the king, and the cold and heartless ingratitude of Charles in allowing him to be sacrificed. He was bound by every principle of honor to protect and save him. The very men who deprived Strafford of his life, despised the king for not saving it. He had apostacized from the great cause of the people to serve the royal interests, and the King should have risked his crown to save him. In less than eight years afterward, when Charles himself was made to answer with his life before the same

dread tribunal of the people, in a still more irregular and unconstitutional form, no act of his whole rash and vascillating life excited in him such apparent remorse as his unmanly yielding up Strafford to destruction and death. This is evident from what is so feelingly said in the "*Eikon Basilikæ*," printed and published the next month after the execution of the King, and supposed to be written by Charles himself while confined a prisoner in Carisbrooke Castle. In the second meditation and prayer he says, or is made to say :

"I Looked upon my Lord of *Strafford*, as a Gentleman, whose great abilities might make a Prince rather afraid, than ashamed to employ him in the greatest affairs of State. \* \* \* That I never bare any touch of Conscience with greater regret: which, as a signe of My repentance, I have often with sorrow confessed both to God and men, as an act of so sinful frailty, that it discovered more fear of Man, than of God. \* \* \* I see it a bad exchange to wound a man's own Conscience, thereby to salve State-sores; to calme the stormes of popular discontents, by stirring a tempest in a man's owne bosom. \* \* \* Nor hath anything more fortified My resolutions against all those violent opportunities, which since have sought to gain a like consent from Me, to Acts, wherein My Conscience is unsatisfied, than the *sharp touches* I have had for what passed Me in My Lord of *Strafford's* business."

The fall of Strafford was the most clear and significant step in the onward march of the parliamentary party, which had occurred since the commencement of the troubles. Such a fact could not have occurred in any preceding reign. The high notions of Henry VIII, the imperious temper of his daughter, Elizabeth, even the timid but arbitrary character of James, would not have permitted such a daring stride to power on the part of the parliament. But this was not all: other important triumphs followed in rapid succession; such as the suppression of the Star Chamber, of the Court of High Commission, the passage of the Triennial Bill, and the abolition of arbitrary taxation; which, if they had been acquiesced in by Charles in good faith, the country would have settled into its regular constitutional channels, and a happy agreement again established between king and people. But this was no part of the king's intention. He seemed to be controlled by a spirit of infatuation, and could not see, that if he still determined to govern his kingdom by orders of council and royal proclamations, he had already granted *too much* to the demands of the parliamentary party. His hopes were reanimated, and his purposes more earnestly determined upon, about this time, by large and influential accessions from the opposition, now that the envy of Strafford had no longer cause for existence; among whom were Edward Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon, the noble and generous Lord Falkland, and Sir John Culpepper. This was in the year 1641. Early in November of that

year, the king had gone to Scotland, with the avowed purpose of holding a parliament there; but with the real purpose, as was feared by the parliamentary party at home, of raising an army in Scotland with the intention of invading England, and putting an end to the controversy at the point of the bayonet. Immediately upon his return from Scotland, what is known in history as the GRAND REMONSTRANCE, was reported in the House of Commons. While this celebrated paper is characterized by all the quaint and grotesque style of that singular age of letters, it is a most remarkable document for the force of its logic, the terse, energetic directness of its argument, and the clear, effective, and consistent collocation of its facts. It was drawn up by Pym, one of the ablest men then in England; and although this powerful summing up of the wrongs and grievances of the people, may now lie hid in the *magnum mare* of political literature at the State Paper Office, as a dry mouldy piece of obsolete parchment, every word and line of it once thrilled the great national heart of England with the electric fire of liberty! It was to the English people what the Declaration of Independence was to us. It was an indictment preferred against the king before the Grand Inquest of the country, and was by that country endorsed as "a true bill."

The consideration of this stirring appeal to the patriotism and passions of that old English people of 1641, occasioned one of the most protracted and stormy debates ever witnessed in the House of Commons. The broad-minded statesmanship of Pym,—the cool considerate principles of Hampden,—the technical and lawyer-like acumen of Glynn,—the fiery directness of Hasselrig,—and the erudite and philosophic dialectics of Selden,—all found ample scope in the development of this bold and daring scheme of popular redress and constitutional reform. It was debated from 8 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock of the next morning, the 22d and 23d days of November, 1641, without intermission or adjournment. The Remonstrance was carried by the small majority of 11 votes, out of over 400 members. It was a full and exhaustive presentment, in a detail of 206 clauses, of the alleged usurpations of the crown upon the rights of the people, and was a most direct and unequivocal impeachment of Charles in his kingly office, and, as such, had no precedent in English history. The remonstrance was ordered to be printed, after another exciting debate upon that question. The king presented his answer in form, drawn up with great tact and ingenuity, and both papers were sent to the people for their solemn arbitrament. This, too, was an anomaly, not only in the habits of that people, but of that age. It was upon this occasion, and on the final passage of the Remonstrance, that OLIVER CROMWELL, in coming down stairs from the House of Commons, said to a friend, that if that measure had failed, he would have embarked for New

England on the next day, never to return. Upon what a slender thread hang the Destinies of Empire! These two most extraordinary papers brought the war of opinion to its very acme of excitement. We shall see that in the course of a very few days after their publication, a certain freak of ill-advised action on the part of Charles, brought on the more doubtful and terrible conflict of arms. It is a very forcible and most truthful theory of Lord Macauley, in his unfinished but admirable history of England, that the marked and characteristic difference between the policy of Elizabeth and that of Charles, in dealing with the same questions in a different generation, was, that the Queen, upon any subject of popular grievance being introduced into her parliaments, at once, and with apparent frankness and cheerfulness, acceded to the wishes of her people; thus completely forestalling and disarming all mere factious demands, and drawing from the quivers of an unfriendly opposition, all the force and poison of the intended missile. On the other hand, while Charles fought every question of popular right which infringed upon the assumed prerogatives of the crown, with a stubborn pertinacity which only exasperated the fiery spirit of the Commons, he always, in the end, yielded his morose and reluctant consent, *when it was too late!* This fatal error has existed in more than one great struggle between a government and its people, or between the people themselves, in a sectional struggle for supremacy. The return of Charles from Scotland was associated with events of the most startling character. The terrible and bloody rebellion in Ireland had occurred while he was yet in Scotland. Devising measures to quell this fearful outbreak of popular fury, had divided the time and attention of the House of Commons in preparing and perfecting the Grand Remonstrance. The spirit and manner of the remedies proposed, clearly implied a suspicion that the king himself had been complicated in these Irish troubles. The only plausible pretext *then* known, for this suspicion, was the very equivocal expression of the king as the news first reached him of the rebellion, when he said: "I hope this ill news from Ireland may hinder some of these follies in England." More indubitable evidence has since come to light, in the correspondence between Charles and the Duke of Ormond, implicating him in these bloody transactions. During the long and exciting debates on the Remonstrance, the boldest speakers in behalf of the people, were Pym, Hampden, Hollis, Hasselrigg and Strode, names made immortal in history by the designation of "The Five Members." These events threw Charles into a phrenzy of fury. Without consulting his constitutional advisers, (for even Clarendon admits that he did not,) but urged by the Queen and Lord Digby, in a most unfortunate moment for himself, for the monarchy, and for the peace of his kingdom, he marched down to the House of Commons, at the head

of 300 of his armed halberdiers, to make the arrest of the five obnoxious members. From that moment, the *Great Civil War*, with all its attendant horrors, was fully inaugurated. This incident is marked by all the historians of the period, whether Cavalier or Roundhead, as the very pivot and turning point of the long and anxious contest between the king and parliament; and was the trumpet-blast which drove the two great parties to put the long-debated issue to the fearful arbitrament of the sword. In my old copy of the "Parliamentary Journals," which, from the engraved book-plate and coat of arms, once belonged to the titular family of the Hollands, all of whom were eminent politicians in their day, and whose fame was crowned by the great abilities of Charles James Fox, one of their descendants, every page of this rash transaction bears the mark, by pencil or otherwise, indicating the opinion of the reader, that this, of all others, was the act of the king's life which determined the fate of the monarchy. So completely had this mad act revolutionized the popular sentiment, that within seven days afterward, and notwithstanding the king had demanded the surrender of the common council of the city, the five members were conducted in triumph through the streets of London to the House of Commons, amid the exultant shouts of the people. This false step of Charles, while it convinced the parliament it would be madness in them any longer to place reliance upon his faith or integrity, also nerved them to prepare for the great contest which now loomed up in the future.

It is not my purpose to paint battle-scenes, or describe the horrors of that sanguinary struggle of six years' duration, in which brother with brother, fathers with their children, were engaged in deadly strife, crushing out thousands of human lives, and sweeping the fair fields of the "merrie England" of that olden time, with the whirlwind of discord and civil war. New sounds are now heard in the land; the busy hum of trade, the jocund song of the reapers, the hallowed music of "the church-going bell," are overcome and stilled by other notes, "grating harsh thunder" upon the ears of the people:

"—— The shout  
Of battle, the barbarian yell, the bray  
Of dissonant instruments, the clang of arms,  
The shrieks of agony, the groans of death,  
In one wild uproar and continued din,  
Shake the still air."

As the scene thus suddenly changes from the halls of St. Stephen's to the tented field,—from the conflict of mind to the conflict of arms,—from the tactics of diplomacy to the tactics of the bayonet,—new figures start out upon the canvas. In the parliamentary tableaux, the figures of Pym and Hampden on the one side, and of

STRAFFORD and FALKLAND on the other, stand out in bold and prominent relief from the common back ground of their partisan compeers. But in the picture which is now presented to our observation, one single, towering, and colossal form, stands out as the central figure, dwarfing every other individual by whom it is surrounded; and seeming to stand alone in its solemn and defiant grandeur; and that figure is—OLIVER CROMWELL! That stern, iron-visaged figure stands there as a moral necessity, the living impersonation of God's retributive justice; as a legitimate and inevitable result of all the wild and revolutionary scenes which have preceded it—of broken laws, of violated rights, and ruthless ruptures of the social organism. It stands there as the Genius of Revolution. It is a *real* presence: it stands there, armor-clad, with uplifted sword, not as a myth, not as a weird shadow without substance or meaning; but as a real, veritable, unavoidable *fact*, MILITARY DESPOTISM SPRINGING FROM CIVIL WAR!

In order to present a clear and distinct outline of that figure (and my remaining time will permit only a mere outline) it is necessary to turn the eye back again into the past for a few years prior to the time when this great controversy was thus suddenly changed from paper resolves to steel and gunpowder. It has been the singular bad fortune of Oliver Cromwell, and of his family, that his and their characters, until within the last half century, have been left almost exclusively in the hands of their enemies. The short interval between his death and the Restoration of the Stuarts, presented no opportunity for a faithful and impartial history of that extraordinary man. From that time to the present, his memory has been traduced,—his motives impugned,—and his great public acts condemned and criticised with a rancor of feeling almost unparalleled in the whole range of biographical literature. It could not be expected that the public writers and partisan historians, during the shameful and profligate reign of the second Charles, would have the manly independence to give as a truthful picture of the man who had shattered the "divine right" of kings, and usurped the throne of a monarchy which had, for more than a thousand years, withstood the shock of contending parties. What kind of justice or decency could be expected of a great political party who, hyena-like, after their restoration to power, and by a solemn vote of parliament, ordered the dead and mouldering body of Cromwell to be exhumed and hung on the common malefactor's gibbet on Tyburn Hill, and then ignominiously thrown into a hole at the foot of the gallows. It has been the fashion with both political and religious writers to hold up the character of Cromwell as the combination and symbol of every bad quality in human nature, without a single virtue, public or domestic, to illuminate the dark and forbidding picture. Two works, however, have appeared in modern times,

which have largely tended to correct the opinion of the world in regard to the great English Revolutionist. These are the "Letters and Speeches of Cromwell," by Thomas Carlyle, and the "Life of the Protector," by Dr. D'Aubigne. It is not to be denied, however, that both of these works by these two distinguished writers, treat the leading acts of Cromwell's life from too partisan a stand-point. The great draw-back to Carlyle, either as a biographer or historian, is his strong tendency to ultraism. With him, all prominent public men, living or dead, are either demi-gods or cyphers; while Dr. D'Aubigne brings to his task too much of the one-sided spirit of the polemic battle-field. He is too prone to canonize his great Protestant Hero as a Saint, rather than estimate him as a Man, with all the passions and motives common to other men. In the brief sketch which I propose to draw of the Protector, I am conscious of no feeling of bias, either for or against him, as the Representative Man of his age.

OLIVER CROMWELL took his seat as a member of the 3d Parliament of Charles I, for the county of Huntingdon, on the 17th day of March, 1628, in the 30th year of his age. The first notice of the future Protector, in the Parliamentary Journals, is on the 11th day of February, 1629, when the House had resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on the state of Religion. He was one of the speakers on that occasion. He was afterwards a firm advocate of the Grand Remonstrance; and it was on one of these occasions, after he had addressed the House in one of his quaint but pithy speeches, that Lord Digby turned to John Hampden and enquired who the rustic orator was, who had just taken his seat: "That sloven," said Hampden, "whom you see before you hath no ornament in his speech; that sloven, I say, if we shall ever come to a breach with the king (which God forbid!) in such case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England!" Although Hampden did not live to see his prediction fulfilled; yet that it was fulfilled, there is still many a land-mark in England, many a traditional glory, both on land and sea to testify. The next entry in the journals, is his appointment as a colonel in the parliamentary army, in connection with Fleetwood, afterwards his son-in-law, and Whalley and Desborough. Soon after, he was appointed Lieutenant General, being by that advancement, second in command to the Earl of Manchester, who was commander-in-chief of the parliamentary forces. This rapid rise in military rank, was wholly due to his brilliant achievements on the fields of Edgehill, Newbery and Marston-Moor. No better proof of the great military genius of Cromwell, could be produced, than the most extraordinary fact, that a man of over 40 years of age, whose whole previous life had been spent in the quiet avocations of a farmer, should all at once, as if by intuition, master the whole system of strategic tactics, and leave his veteran competitors



far in the rear. The wonderful skill with which, in a few short months, he transformed the awkward recruit into the practised and invincible soldier,—the unerring tact with which his clear-sighted intellect detected the appropriate movement, in the critical moment of the doubtful fate of battle,—and the rapidity, accuracy, and irresistible force with which he executed it,—placed Cromwell in the front rank of the illustrious captains of his age. There is no more significant or suggestive fact, in his whole military career, than his inflexible strictness in relation to the religious sentiment of his soldiers. This, it is true, might have resulted from a profound and sagacious insight into the peculiar character of the times and the temper of the people, which had produced such grotesque characters as “Praise-God-Barebones,” and Hopkins the Witch-Finder, without a particle of personal religious sentiment on the part of the commander. But that Richard Baxter, the immortal author of the “Soul’s Rest,” although a royalist in politics, and of an opposite religious faith, should be selected by Cromwell as the chaplain of his own favorite regiment, is, in my opinion, some evidence of at least a fitful piety and occasional toleration. Unless disturbed or displaced by other more personal and absorbing passions, the Parliamentary ensign, with its unique blazonry of Five Bibles, and the motto, “God with us,” was, to Cromwell, as sacred as was ever the consecrated legend, “*in hoc signo vinces*,” to the devoted followers of Constantine. But the military character of Cromwell needs no illustration. It stands unchallenged before the world. His great battles are his military historians. His charge at Marston-Moor, crashing through the ranks of the enemy, his left arm in a sling, and his right hand dealing death to all who confronted him, is as much a testament of his *personal* courage, as the battles of Dunbar and Worcester are proofs of his *genius* as a commander. It is his political and religious character which forms the riddle of his life. The three great points of his public life, upon which unfriendly biographers have rested their condemnation, are, 1st, His participation in the trial and execution of the king; 2d, His secret agency, as alleged, in procuring the passage of the Self-Denying-Ordinance; and, 3d, His dissolution of the Long Parliament by force of arms. To the first and third of these charges, there can be but one answer; and that is, they are wholly indefensible, either by the laws or the constitution of England; and can only be extenuated, not defended, upon the ground that anarchy had trampled out all law and order, leaving each man’s own individual safety as the last arbiter of his rights, the dreadful negation of all sympathy and all humanity, in the final struggle for personal security. The second charge has never been established; and, as an inference from the circumstances, is unfounded in fact. But I shall take them up briefly in their order. When such men as Charles James Fox, William Godwin,

and Thomas Carlyle, attempt to justify the execution of the king upon *legal* as well as political grounds, even their great abilities are unequal to the task.

It is only when the question is looked at as a struggle for the last plank in the shipwreck, that the mind can yield its consent to the catastrophe. It is evident to my mind that this is the view which Cromwell took of the situation. All writers agree that at first he was most anxious to save the life of the king, and that he and his son-in-law, Ireton, were in secret negotiations with him on the subject. It was a most characteristic act of perfidy, on the part of the king, which suddenly changed Cromwell from a conservative to a regicide. The Queen had retired to France prior to these negotiations. Her proud and splenetic temperament could not brook the idea of submission on the part of the king. She had heard of Cromwell's propositions for an accommodation, and the terms of royal favor to him, as the future Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. She wrote to the king, bitterly reproaching him for his concessions to rebels and traitors. This letter was intercepted by Cromwell, but allowed to reach the king. A spy ascertained when and in what mode the king intended to send a reply to the Queen. It was to be sewed up in the skirt of a saddle, to be taken on a particular night to the Blue Boar Inn, in Holborn, and to be despatched from thence to Dover. Cromwell and Ireton, disguised as common troopers, seized the saddle and found the letter. Charles, in this letter, advised the Queen "to rest easy as to the concessions he should make; that in due time she would learn how he intended to deal with these rogues, who, instead of a silken garter, should be fitted with a hempen cord." This fact is too well authenticated to admit of any reasonable doubt of its existence. It is asserted in the memoirs of both Lord Broghill and the Baron Masseres. But the most significant assertion of its truth is that by Lord Bolingbroke. In a conversation with Mr. Pope and Lord Marchmont, in 1742, Lord Bolingbroke said that the old and second Earl of Oxford had frequently told him that he had seen and had in his hands the original letter itself. That letter sealed the fate of the king. Cromwell at once advanced with his army to Windsor, to keep an eye on the negotiations which were still kept up between the parliament and the king. From this point, and at this juncture of affairs, commenced the fatal rupture between the army and the parliament. The leading party in the parliament, headed by the presbyterians, now saw no other method of destroying, or at least checking, the domination of the military power, than to crush or depress it, by the *regal* power in the constitution. Repeated propositions for an agreement had passed between the captive king and the Commons; but the great obstacle which had all along stood in the way, still kept them asunder. This was the persistent and the stubborn refusal of

Charles to abolish episcopacy, though he had consented to alter the liturgy. But notwithstanding this disputed point the negotiations for a treaty were still carried on with vigor, and both parties, for the first time, seemed to be in earnest to come to an agreement. But it was now all too late! The die was cast! A new turn was given to the whole machinery of revolution. The victorious army, with Cromwell at its head, fulminated from Windsor a furious remonstrance against all negotiations, and demanded vengeance against the king for his perfidy and double-dealing. When the parliament, in defiance of the army, voted for the acceptance of the treaty of Newport, as a final adjustment of the long and bloody struggle between the crown and the people, safety and self-protection to the great army leaders undoubtedly required one of two things: either the overthrow of the parliament or the destruction of the king. The excess of despotism and of crime, on the part of Cromwell and his compeers, was, that they unnecessarily perpetrated both of these outrages; one by force of arms, the other without law and in violation of all the traditions of the constitution. Prior to the open rupture between the parliament and the army, the king had been removed to Hurst Castle, in Hampshire. The parliament, in the meantime, not quite forgetful of its former power and glory, began to issue their ordinances against the encroachments of the army upon the civil power of the government, when they were astounded by a message from Cromwell that he intended paying them a visit in London on the next day with his whole army, with the imperious demand that they should raise for him the sum of £40,000 in the city. That was the crisis, the very turning point or pivot of the revolution, between the military and civil power, and was, in fact, a new or counter revolution. Cromwell, although beginning his wonderful career as a legislator, now stands, amid the wild commotion around him, as the very personification of military domination. The Commons, although they must have felt themselves as destitute of all the means, if not the hope, of prevailing in their new scheme of adjustment, had still the courage to resist, and to attempt, in the face of that most remarkable army, to finish the treaty they had begun with the king. They had taken into consideration, in a new spirit, the whole of his concessions; and although they had formerly voted them unsatisfactory, they renewed the consultation with greedy vigor. After a stormy debate, which lasted three days, it was carried in the king's favor by a vote of 129 against 83, that his concessions were "a proper foundation for the two houses to proceed upon in settling the affairs of the nation."

This was the last attempt in favor of the king; for the next day Colonel Pride, by whose orders it is nowhere in all the history of that period intimated, at the head of two regiments of soldiers, blockaded all the passages to the House, and seized forty-seven mem-

bers of the Presbyterian party, and sent them to prison. Ninety-six more members were forcibly excluded, and none were allowed to enter but such as were favorable to the views and wishes of the army. This gross invasion of the rights and jurisdiction of the civil power has passed into history by the name of *Pride's Purge*, and the few remaining members were called the *Rump Parliament*. This remnant of a House of Commons immediately proceeded to rescind the vote upon the treaty with the king, abolished the House of Lords, and appointed a Council of State, as the executive branch of the new government, of which Oliver Cromwell was a member. In some four years and four months thereafter, this same parliament, or rather this dislocated remnant of a parliament, composed at that time of the mere slavish and willing tools of the army, was dispersed at the point of the bayonet by Cromwell himself in person! One stride more, and we shall find him wielding the sceptre of an empire, the daring successor of a long line of ancient kings, the sole and self-willed arbiter of life, liberty, and property, by as bold an act of usurpation as is recorded in the annals of history! It is a most noteworthy and suggestive fact, that in three of the leading modern revolutions, of England, of Sweden, and of France, the senatorial branch of the government went down, two of them in a contest with the more popular representative body, and the other with the executive. In France, the *tiers-etat*, or third estate, overthrew both the nobility and clergy, as constituent legislative branches of the government, when convened in the form of states-general. In both England and France, the *modus operandi* was a single and unresisted vote of the Commons. In Sweden, it was done by order of the king. It is remarkable, too, how revolutions track with each other in their onward movement, either in the fruition of their designs, or in overleaping the results primarily contemplated by those who set them in motion. However wild and erratic these outbreaks of human passion may seem, there is at last a kind of moral symmetry between them, which seems to be governed, comet-like, by some fixed law of their being. Hence, it has passed into a proverb, that history always repeats itself. This historic maxim, based upon the principle that like causes produce like effects in the fate of nations, is of vast moment to us as a people just now, because *we* are standing in the midst of a moral revolution none the less radical or dangerous for being the *consequence* rather than the *cause* of a great civil war. In contemplating these momentous facts of by-gone years in other countries, the mind painfully and involuntarily turns to our own times and circumstances, with a degree of trembling anxiety to know whether history may not repeat itself here, in the fierce struggle for power and supremacy between the great depositories of national sovereignty.

But we turn back again to Cromwell's legislative life: There is,

perhaps, no act of his whole public career in which the charge of cunning and duplicity has been more generally and persistently applied, than his alleged instrumentality in bringing about what is known in history as the "Self-Denying Ordinance." But it was the combination of circumstances, rather than any known positive fact, which gave color to this charge. A dispute arose between the Earl of Manchester and his Lieutenant General at the second battle of Newbury. Upon the retreat of the king's army from the field, Cromwell applied to Manchester for leave to follow them with his brigade of horse. This was peremptorily refused. Both Manchester and Essex had, prior to this time, been suspected by some of the more radical officers of being lukewarm in the parliamentary cause. Both of these military leaders were members of the House of Lords. Cromwell, in the House of Commons, boldly made the charge of cowardice and mismanagement against Manchester. This was in October, 1644; in the succeeding December, the Ordinance was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Tate, seconded by Sir Henry Vane, Jr., which provided that no member of either House of Parliament should, during the war, enjoy or execute any office or command, civil or military. Rushworth, the most reliable historian of parliamentary proceedings, gives the full particulars, and the points of debate, of a private meeting at Lord Essex's, between the Scotch Commissioners and Whitelock, Maynard, and others, all enemies of Cromwell, in which the only question for consideration was, how to put an end to the growing power of the Lieutenant General.

Now, although no particular mode was adopted to carry out the object of the meeting, yet as the Self-Denying Ordinance was moved in the House of Commons a very short time afterward, and the motion was promptly seconded by Sir Henry Vane, Cromwell's most bitter enemy, the conclusion is almost irresistible, that this celebrated legislative act was the product of the secret conclave held at the house of Lord General Essex. That the friends of Cromwell, in the parliament by a special resolution excepting him and others out of its operation, thus changing the poison into healthful ailment is no satisfactory evidence of its origin, although this fact is seized upon with great avidity by Clarendon, Hume, and others, as proof "strong as holy writ" against Cromwell and his adherents. The true foundation for the passage of this celebrated statute, so far as the parliament was concerned, however particular individuals, and even Cromwell, may have intrigued for its adoption, was the fact that serious reverses to the parliamentary forces had occurred under the immediate command of Lord General Essex, the son of that unfortunate Earl of Essex whose life fell a sacrifice to a whim of Elizabeth—Essex stood in the parliamentary interest as the representative man of the nobility; and to get rid of him, without alienating the

class to which he belonged, was an extremely perplexing and delicate task. Had there been no suspension of the ordinance in favor of particular officers, there could have been no charge, or suspicion even, of any sinister views in the promoters of it. Two great objects were to be attained: the *dismissal* of Essex, and the *retention* of Cromwell, both of which were accomplished. The result of the change was soon perceptible; for not long afterward, the great and decisive battle of Naseby was fought, which completely broke the power of the royalists. The parliament owed the result of this last great battle with the king, to the genius and valor of Cromwell. The fate of the day had become doubtful;—Prince Rupert, a nephew of the king, at the head of the royal cavalry had forced the left wing of the parliamentarians to give way; when Cromwell, at the head of the horse, among whom was his own famous regiment known by the name of “Ironsides,” made one of those well-timed and furious charges, such as had won Edgehill, and Newbury, and Marston, with a sweep of power that carried everything before him, and which made old John Milton liken him to one of those ancient mythological giants who hurled mountains at the gods. To fully develop the character of Cromwell, as a military commander, would, of itself, require all the space of an ordinary lecture. Enough to say, that upon him fell the duty and the glory of terminating this most disastrous and unnatural war;—upon him, also, devolved the still more difficult and dangerous undertaking of a re-construction of the government. That the manner in which he did this, and the means he employed to accomplish it, was a clear, naked, and unequivocal usurpation, no man in his senses will deny. This gross usurpation of power consisted of two things: 1st, the abolishment of the House of Lords, in which he had a leading share; and, 2d, his dispersing the members from the House of Commons, at the point of the bayonet, of which he assumed the *sole* responsibility. That Cromwell had other impulses, besides mere political ones, in the destruction of the aristocratic branch of the legislature, is quite probable from an ebullition of feeling said to have been exhibited by him in his quarrel with the Earl of Manchester, when he spitefully told that nobleman: “There never would be a good time in England till we had done with Lords.” These two violent and unconstitutional acts go to prove the inevitable results of all revolutions. The end of revolution, when once begun, however just in its inception, is what none but Deity can foresee. Poor, blind man, with all his boasted powers of intellect, when once fairly caught in the surging flood-tide of popular commotion, tearing away, in its fearful course, the bulwarks of laws and constitutions, is tossed about on its angry waves, hopeless and powerless to steer the frail bark whose guiding helm he has *himself* torn away! The mere forms of government have but little to do by way of modifying or checking the movements or the

results of civil revolution. Indeed, it is a great problem, yet to be solved, whether the tendencies of free institutions, under the pressure and temptations of a great civil war, are not more direct in the line of military domination, under the lead of some giddy or selfish popular idol, than those of a monarchy itself. The object which originally called the English people to arms, was to hedge in the crown within its true constitutional limits. No man then dreamed of the total overthrow of the government, such as was witnessed in the violent accession of Cromwell to the supreme power of the nation. The two legislative branches of the government, the Lords and Commons, nobly united with the people in their just demands for redress and restriction. It was, therefore, not only an act of ingratitude on the part of Cromwell and his unscrupulous adherents, in overthrowing the House of Peers; but it was a most distinct and naked act of usurpation and tyranny. It would have been no more anomalous, as a co-ordinate branch of the government, under the Protectorate, than it was under the Monarchy.

The office of Protector was only a substitutional and not dissimilar form of executive power to that of the king, and was by no means a new title in English history. It is a singular fact, that so manifest was this constitutional truth to the English people, when sobered by reflection, that Cromwell was compelled to submit to a reorganization of the government by restoring the House of Lords to the constitution. It is this fact, coupled with the subsequent peaceful restoration of the monarchy, which makes the English Revolution of 1640 so peculiar, and altogether unlike any other successful civil war in all history. The English constitution, although neither written on brass or parchment, but existing only in the *lex non scripta* of traditional custom, withstood not only the shock, but the no less critical rebound of revolution, and vibrated back to its old resting place among its great original elements of political organization in King, Lords and Commons. There is no single act of all Cromwell's eventful life more reprehensible than his prominent agency in destroying the Senatorial branch of the national legislature. It was an outrage upon the constitution for which there can be no excuse; and the specific and immediate object for which it was done, the trial and execution of the king, makes it infamous as well as despotic. His excuse, that he committed these outrages from the necessity of the case, will not avail him. His great coadjutor and friend, John Milton, in one of the grandest epics in the language, exclaims:

"So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,  
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds."

These encroachments by one branch of government upon another are always the most dangerous, because they are subversive of the

very fundamentals of constitutional liberty. Protection from this kind of usurpation has been recognised as a cardinal principle in all forms of government, with the least pretensions to public liberty, from the time of the Amphictyonic league to the American Confederacy. In this great essential of liberty, the partition of sovereignty into several distinct and independent departments of government, the English constitution is the great model of our own. But in the enlargement of the area of popular liberty, and in what may be termed the refinement of this system of checks and balances of organized political power in the several departments, our constitution is a wide departure from all governments, ancient or modern, which have preceded it. In this regard, it is an experiment upon all past history; it is a forward movement upon the great and disputed question of man's capacity for self-government, and a vital question for the American people to decide is, whether they will put their government to a test which will submit every fibre of this complex texture of constitutional frame-work to its utmost tension. Let them not carelessly or recklessly close their ears to the warning admonitions which come up from the sepulchre of dead nations. If this government shall fail;—if there shall be a rupture of its delicate and harmonious structure;—if this wonderful scheme of laws and constitutions shall be improperly changed or broken up,—the clock of civilization, regulated by liberty and law, will be set back for centuries. Mankind will again be driven to renew their oft-repeated struggle for those great personal rights ordained by the Almighty as common to all;—and no man can dream of the time, the blood, and the treasure, it may cost to regain such lost vantage ground of constitutional liberty. Mr. Justice BLACKSTONE, in one of his admirable law lectures, speaking of the harmonious action of the several branches of the British Constitution, remarks:

“Thus every branch of our civil polity supports and is supported, regulates and is regulated, by the rest; for the two houses drawing in two directions of opposite interest, and the prerogative in another still different from them both, they naturally keep each other from exceeding their proper limits; while the whole is prevented from separation, and artificially connected by the mixed nature of the crown, which is a part of the legislative, and the sole executive magistrate. Like three distinct powers in mechanics, they jointly impel the machine of government in a direction different from what either, acting by itself, would have done; but at the same time in a direction partaking of each, and formed out of all; a direction which constitutes the true line of liberty and happiness of the community.”

It is not in the power of human language to present a more forcible, and at the same time a more beautiful syllogism, of the several parts, or the harmonious operation, rightly understood and administered, of this concrete triplicity in the English constitution, than is contained in this extract from this eminent law writer. And



although Cromwell, afterwards, called to the administration of justice, in the law tribunals, some of the purest and ablest judges who ever sat in the English courts; and although he himself executed the duties of his own high trust with even-handed justice; and it may be, as he claimed it to have been, that he usurped the supreme power only to preserve it from the factions; yet, notwithstanding all this, his forcibly overturning the government at the point of the bayonet, was one of the clearest and most daring abuses of the military power recorded in the annals of civilized history. The real character of Cromwell, whether political or religious, is at last a problem difficult of solution. He has, as a general thing, been denounced by historians as a tyrant and hypocrite. He was undoubtedly the one, but there is no satisfactory evidence that he was the other.

There was a certain robust English mind about Cromwell which is not to be mistaken. I do not believe there was a scintilla of hypocrisy in his composition. In the minor affairs of life or of State, his diplomacy may at times have approached dissimulation; but in all things where the passions of his soul were engaged, his directness of thought and straightforward form of expression, preclude all idea of sham. "Paint me as I am, wart and all," was his remark to Walker, the artist, while sitting to him for the best portrait we have of his manly lineaments. He wanted to go down to posterity with his physical as well as moral features touched by the pencil of truth. His religious character is not so easily understood. Cromwell was an enthusiast, in some points a fanatic; and he undoubtedly mistook his own fluctuating and intensified emotional sensations for a kind of divine inspiration. His humility was an unconscious assimilation; his pious self-abasement was apparent, not real; his mystic and delusive theosophy was manifest, not only in his public utterances as a magistrate, but in his religious devotions as an individual. His prayers were conceived more in the spirit of demand than of supplication. This was the arrogance of fanaticism, not the humble submission of rational piety. It was an irreverent spirit of self-righteousness, an impious exaltation of self, not a just conception of the infinite dissimilitude between the creature and the Creator. All this was delusion, springing from a morbid moral sense, not the sound and healthy action of reason as the result of undisturbed intellectual organization. These instances of moral phenomena, although rare, do occasionally exist in some of the greatest and best of men. In this regard, Cromwell was, so to speak, a kind of emotional but subdued counterpart of Ignatius Loyala, of Francis Xavier, or Martin Luther; and with no intention of confounding the Christian with the Moslem character, not unlike Mahomet, in the alternate exaltation of his feelings, and the ascetic fervor of his imagination. In offering up his fervid and im-

passioned supplications to Deity, in the trying circumstances by which he was surrounded, in proportion as his emotions were excited by the emergency which had drawn him thus to beseech heaven for support, his faith in an approving response to his prayers, or his demands, would amount to a solemn conviction on his peculiar physiological temperament. His religious faith was not so much a logical, as it was a psychological fact. In his spiritual man, he profoundly felt and realized the religious sentiment; it was an innate and essential portion of his being; but he could not, or he did not, reason upon its truth. In keeping with his character, this enthusiasm was not unmingled with the coldest formalism. With him, to obey the driest formulas of his creed, was as much a duty as to believe in the existence of his God, or to repent of his sins. This, in my opinion, is the true explanation of Cromwell's religious character. In him the religious sentiment existed, not by any process of ratiocination, but it sprung from the emotional organization of his temperament, and the enthusiasm of his mental and moral character. There was a kind of pietistic egotism in his faith, a sort of personal exaltation and self-reliant bigotry in his religious convictions, which clouded his great intellect and made him the victim of delusion. There are several marked passages in his life which can be rationally accounted for upon no other satisfactory hypothesis. In these spells of spiritual exaltation, these weird moments of soul-abstraction, Cromwell undoubtedly deluded himself into the belief that he had direct and actual communication with Deity. With him, the scriptural declaration that "the voice of God had walked in the garden in the cool of the day," in the presence of primeval man, was a fact and not a metaphor. It was one of these hallucinations, so strangely blended with but controlled by his natural sagacity, which determined the fate of the King. It was either this, or the most consummate hypocrisy, which induced him solemnly to declare that Charles was to be dealt with according to God's revelation in answer to *his* prayers. The political and partizan ballads of any period or people, while they may in some degree illustrate the general spirit of the times, are not the most reliable sources of historic truth, either with regard to men or measures, yet they are not to be wholly disregarded or set aside. In an old and rude ballad of the Commonwealth, entitled "A Coffin for King Charles," to be found in the eighth volume of the King's Pamphlets, in the folio edition of "Broad-sides," printed in 1649, there is an evident hit at this over-wrought self-reliant, almost impious characteristic of Cromwell. He is made to soliloquize upon the death of the King as follows:

"Now Charles the I. is tumbled downe,  
The Second I not feare;  
I graspe the septer, weare the crowne,  
Nor for Jehovah care."

It may, then, be well affirmed of Cromwell, that if we are to measure and determine upon his religious character by the standard of reason and common sense, or by the more orthodox principles of modern theology, the verdict will unquestionably have to be, that he was an over-excited enthusiast, whose moral action was superinduced by delusion, through a self-imposed inspiration from Deity. His struggles and wrestlings with an unquiet conscience,—his frequent and agonizing appeals, through the medium of prayer, for a light from heaven to guide his wavering footsteps, in relation to the execution of his anointed sovereign; and his most remarkable and contradictory interviews on that subject with his cousin John Cromwell, in his character of Commissioner from the States of Holland to save the life of the king, are clear and indubitable indications of this fact.

There is another charge made against Cromwell, which, I think, is perfectly explained by the peculiar trait which we are now considering, *the deep emotional character of the man*. It is his visit, solitary and alone, in the deep hours of the night, to look upon the dead body of Charles, as it lay in state in the palace of Whitehall. It is charged against him, by the historians of the period, that he did so, with the mean and ignoble purpose of gratifying his personal feelings of satisfaction at the regicidal drama which had just been completed. How improbable a supposition! What a distorted view of both the man and the occasion! To my mind, that most remarkable scene borders on the sublime of solemn and dramatic effect. What deep and mighty emotions must have swept the stormy soul of the great Regicide in thus gazing upon the constitutional representative, but most unconstitutional exponent of a great system of government, transmitted through a long and proud line of kings, then lying in the cold embrace of death, which *he* had been so largely instrumental in producing! What a scene for a painter!—The *living* Cromwell gazing upon the *dead* Charles! No light or frivolous feelings of levity or indifference were passing through the mind of Cromwell at that midnight levee of the living and the dead! That mind was travelling back, with deep and painful emotion, through the long years of the past,—back to the death of Elizabeth, when James was on his royal tour to London, to have his “kingly crown put on.” In that progress, with the young Charles in his train, James stopped on a hunting frolic at the old manorial house of Hinchinbrook, the seat of the old cavalier Sir Oliver Cromwell, an uncle of the greater Oliver. The two boys, of equal age, the future King and the future Protector, gamboled together in frolicsome past-time on the green and beautiful banks of the Ouse, little dreaming of the great parts they were destined to play against each other in the far-off future.

Other thoughts than levity, other feelings than those of low personal gratification, would such a scene produce on such a man! In that silent and impressive meeting of the living and the dead, Cromwell's reflections and meditations were also resting upon the fact, that, at a time when he was halting between his desire to save the king and the performance of his duty to save the country, Charles had been specially kind to his family. All these things pressed upon his mind in that solemn death-chamber; and instead of going there, as a personal enemy, to mock the royal dust, he was there to *feel as a man*; irresistably impelled to it by the fascination of the great catastrophe. Any other solution is distorted and unnatural; but this is in keeping with the scene, with the clear probabilities of the case, and with the natural feelings of *such* a man on so remarkable and solemn an occasion. Conscience, too, may have played her part in that nocturnal scene!—because there come moments to every man, seared as his heart may be by its contact with selfishness and deceit, when, in spite of himself, he forgets the future, and involuntarily lays aside his darling projects, his hopes, his fears, his yearnings after the toys of ambition, and the trappings of power, in a contrite and anxious contemplation of the past, and a searching analysis of his conduct through life. That man must have no great guilt or great sorrow on his soul, who can look so steadily into the future, that the past shall have no share in his meditations when contemplating the immediate presence of Death and the Grave. Cromwell, in that solemn hour of the night, in the presence of the royal dead, and with a conscience painfully alive to all the responsibilities of the regicidal tragedy, felt that he stood there as the judicial murderer of his sovereign. He could not, in that solemn and impressive hour, lay the flattering unction to his soul, that Charles Stuart had been *legally* tried and condemned by a *constitutional* tribunal of his country, invested rightfully *by law* with the great power to sit upon the life of the king. He knew, as well as any man could know, that the Court of High Commission, erected impromptu for that single purpose, had been created by less than a majority of the House of Commons, in the absence, and after the destruction, by its own usurpation, of the House of Lords, as a co-ordinate branch of the government. These were not pleasant reflections, in that dread hour of self-communing; and if Cromwell did not feel the sharp thrusts of a self-upbraiding conscience, in looking upon the headless trunk of the dead king before him, he was either more or less than man, and a very monster of revolution and anarchy.

Such was Oliver Cromwell; a religious enthusiast, an unreasoning fanatic, a military usurper, but a clear-sighted and sagacious man of the world, in all things which pertained to the control of men, or gave tone and direction to the public will; a patriot in the

beginning, a heartless and unscrupulous usurper in the end. There was the most perfect homogeneity in his intellectual, but the most startling incongruities in his moral faculties. This want of balance, this absence of mental and moral equation, in his character, sometimes produced the most startling and shocking contrasts in his actions. As for instance, he could write to his friend, Col. Allured, when that friend's son had fallen in battle, with the most touching pathos of sympathetic friendship, wholly overcome by his emotions; while with the same pen, and from the same battle-field, he could deliberately sit down and indite the coldest and most heartless account to William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons, of his putting 2,000 Catholic Irishmen to the sword at the siege of Drogheda, and shipping hundreds as slaves to the Barbadoes, with the impious declaration that it was the "righteous judgment of God!" Such are the monstrous results when politics and fanaticism are the co-operative agents of private ambition or State policy! The conduct of the Protector, in more than one of his great public acts, stands out as a warning light to guide the footsteps of public men, with God's solemn admonition that it is not right, it is not just, it is not wise, to govern a great and educated people with the lash of private vengeance or the whip of partisan fury.

Cromwell's friendship and enmities were profoundly partisan; he could see no good come out of Nazareth; while all virtue and goodness were centered in *his Jerusalem*. But with all his faults, he was, in some points of his administration of public affairs, one of the best governors who ever ruled the destinies of England. His firmness in ordering the trial and execution of Don Panteleon, the brother of the Portuguese Ambassador, and an attache of the legation, for the murder of an English gentleman in the streets of London, in despite of his asserted official protection from an English trial by the paramount authority of international law, and at the risk of an open rupture with all the great powers of Europe, was a trait in his character which found an approving and exultant response in the sturdy national pride of the English people. In this he was the representative man, the pronounced type of the people among whom he lived. This leading feature of Cromwell's political character is the key to his whole wonderful career. In the great power of self-will, and the union of moral and physical courage to override the opposing will of others, he has been very much underrated by contemporary historians. He could not have attained his high position in the State, and among such a people, had he been the character handed down to us by biassed historians like Clarendon, or royal satirists like Butler. That he had great abilities as a statesman, and almost unequalled tact as a popular leader, is not denied by any one. It is also, inferentially, equally true, that he must have had some

great moral qualities, otherwise he could not have commanded the regard of such men as John Milton, John Hampden, and Sir Matthew Hale. He made his power felt by his turbulent countrymen at home, and respected by his hostile national enemies abroad. His resolute will and clear masculine intellect, made his administrative policy alike conduce to the glory and prosperity, if not the happiness, of the nation, and had not death intervened, he was about to inaugurate a policy upon the great religious question of the day, which might have changed the whole face of Europe. But a few days of suffering and disease,—a few shiverings and burnings of a tertian ague, and all was in the dust. On the 3d day of September, 1658, the anniversary of his great battles of Dunbar and Worcester, he breathed his last, after having appointed his eldest son Richard to succeed him in the Protectoral office. In this last official act of the Great Protector, his singular contradistinctive duality of character, his greatness and his weakness, are most strikingly exemplified. In these last fluttering moments of his life, in the very article of death, the feeble and expiring energies of his soul were rapt and absorbed in the future of England and the aggrandizement of his family. His strong and his weak points were equally exhibited. The unmerciful Iconoclast of the idols surrounding the throne,—the relentless destroyer of Dynasties and of Legitimacy in the succession of regal power and dominion,—even in the last ebbing moments of his life, he was looking to a new line of succession for the transmission of his own no less absolute power and authority, and was contemplating the means of perpetuating the organization of his party and the supremacy of his family. While he had stricken down the throne with the iron hand of revolution, he was clinging to one of the great props and pillars upon which that throne was based, the right of Primogeniture; but how weak, how imbecile he was in the choice of the instrument for the accomplishment of his purposes. The timid and gentle-hearted Richard was wholly unfit for the great trust. Had the choice fallen upon his younger and much abler brother Henry, the descendant of a Regicide, instead of a Guelph, might to-day be ruling the destinies of the British Empire. A young Prince Oliver instead of an Arthur, a young Cromwell instead of a Coburg, might have been the recipient of those brilliant ovations so bountifully tendered by us a few weeks ago to the modest son of Queen Victoria. But Cromwell died, as he had lived, a riddle and a mystery; and the last moments of his life, like that life itself, furnish no reliable solution of his complex and incongruous character. But how fearfully impressive was that closing drama of a great and stormy life! There was a wild harmony in that remarkable death-bed scene. While one of the most terrible storms ever witnessed in England was roaring through the dark and deserted streets of London, on that old autumnal night o.

1658, in a retired room in the kingly palace of Whitehall, under the same roof which had sheltered the dead body of Charles Stuart nine years before, there was passing to its final audit, with the howling elements for his appropriate requiem, one of the stormiest human souls, one of the sternest and most restless human spirits ever shrined in a tabernacle of clay. With him were buried the political results, but not the bitterness, of the GREAT ENGLISH CIVIL WAR. The bad passions engendered by the Revolution long survived its Great Leader, but the axe of the executioner, the fires of persecution, the phrenzy of legislation, at last gave way to time and returning reason, and the English People, emerging from the school of a most bitter experience, once more reposed in peace and security beneath the protecting ægis of LAWS AND CONSTITUTIONS.

And now, my friends, have *we* nothing to learn in these lessons of history, these convulsions of human passion, and these rash assaults upon constitutions? Is our fabric of government so perfect and imperishable; is public virtue here so infallible; are we, as a people, so far removed from the temptations of folly and corruption, that *we* have nothing to fear from like causes and passions which have produced the downfall of the proudest empires of other days? I speak in no partizan sense, but in the earnest and warning spirit of a teacher; for every man, however humble his abilities may be, who speaks to a public audience upon the great affairs or duties of life, thereby assumes, for the time being, the responsible character of a public instructor. I lift myself high above the mere politician; in the language of the great Irish orator, I "let the altar and the god sink together in the dust," when I solemnly declare to you here to-night with *some* knowledge of the great crisis which has not passed from but is still upon us, that if it is true that "history is philosophy teaching by example," her lessons should sink deep into our hearts; and we should bring earnest souls and honest minds to the investigation, the understanding, and the redress, of whatever wrongs and abuses, near or remote, may have crept into this great and glorious government of ours, in which we all are *compelled* to have a common and inseparable interest. We shall fall far short of our high mission as men, as citizens, and as the custodians of a christian civilization, if we fail in this great duty which GOD HAS SET BEFORE US! If we shall so forget the passions and animosities engendered by civil war, as to join in a common effort to *restore* the Government in the same manly, cordial, and catholic spirit, in which our great ancestors, both cavalier and puritan, united in its creation and defence,—if we shall again recognise and re-establish those great principles of constitutional liberty, of equal rights, of just laws, and a full participation, by *all* the people, in the  *blessings* as well as the *obligations* of government, which energised

and signalized the English and the American Revolutions,—this vast and magnificent country of ours, with its enterprising people, its unbounded resources, and its high intelligence, will again be put upon the track of power and empire;—and the eye of reanimated faith will see in the far-off and majestic Future, standing in the political heavens as a Bow of Promise reflected by the Sun of Liberty upon the black storm-cloud of Civil Revolution, that grand old CONSTITUTION of ours, with its noble cluster of KINDRED SOVEREIGNTIES—

“ High o'er the world exalt its brows sublime,  
And lift its Pillars through the Storms of Time!”

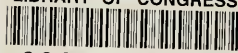








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